843 pregnancy are also said to be rare, although miscarriages in later pregnancy up to two or three months before the birth are more numerous because of the continuing heavy work of the mother in the fields. The mother in the agricultural village normally works up to the time for 849 the birth. She eats her normal diet. After birth, the child is placed on a large comforter (futon) beside the mother.

The midwife, after delivery, goes once a day for a week to the mother's home. Her fee is not decided upon before hand, but according [846] to custom, averages ¥350 for a normal and ¥500 for a difficult birth, [865] a low fee probably enforced by the poverty and lack of cash of farm families. (In Naha corresponding fees are said to be ¥1-2000).

853 There is no uniform way of feeding the child after birth. In most cases the child is not breast fed until after the third day due to the fact that mothers have little milk at this time. The first, second, and the third days it is fed warm water with small amounts of white sugar, but this is by no means universal. Some mothers have said that they give the child the breast 4 or 5 hours after birth. In any case, the child very quickly becomes accustomed to feeding at the breast, and this continues for an indeterminate period, depending on the mother and the child. It may be for two years, or until the next [862] child comes. In all communities studied, other arrangements are made in the unlikely event that the mother does not have milk of her own. The child may be given evaporated cow's milk or friends or relatives nurse the child. In Minatogawa, if a woman has special duties or takes a trip out of town and cannot take her child with her, she can pay to have it nursed.

843 One belief regarding pregnancy still exists among the old in the Ginoza area. If a new house is being built during the pregnancy of the woman of the house, the cap of the roof is not put on until after the birth has taken place.

2

Birth Customs and Convalescence

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[189] In Minatogawa, and to a much lesser extent in Hanashiro, birth customs are related to certain beliefs about the pig pen. These were not known in Hateuda. In the two southern villages they have virtually disappeared, except among the old. According to a Hanashiro farmer's wife, the child on the day of its birth is washed, dressed in new clothes, and carried to the pig pen, which is supposed to frighten away evil spirits (bakemono). [See footnote 1, bottom of p. 257--analyst]

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

away evil spirits (bakemono).[1] From the pig sty the child is then taken to the kitchen, where a pot of rice has been cooking. Soot from the outside of the pot is taken up with the middle finger of the right hand and a round black spot pressed on the forehead above the bridge of the nose between the eyebrows. The reason for this could not be ascertained.

Beliefs in the power of a pig sty to ward off evil spirits are still held in Minatogawa and the customs were generally practiced up to the beginning of the war. But these beliefs were related more to celebrations following the birth of the child than to the birth itself. The elements of these beliefs seemed to be that the afterworld was close to this world. If a child were not protected, the spirits of the afterworld would steal the child and take him back. The party celebrating the birth lasted a whole week, usually starting each evening about 8 and ending at 8 the following morning. Guests stayed up all night to prevent the child from being stolen, for if anyone went to sleep, the spirit would enter. Spirits followed behind the guest and were especially dangerous after 10 at night. The spirits however were frightened by the pigs; guests arriving during the danger hours went to the pig pen first to scare off the spirit following them, before entering the house. There was no evidence, in the parties I attended, of any present observance of this custom by young parents. The week of all night parties is no longer held.

These beliefs were found in Minatogawa. Hanashiro informants had heard of such customs, but were vague about them. While their seeming absence in Matsuda may be due to incomplete data, there may be another explanation. These beliefs may have been picked up by fishing people from other sources.

One other birth custom known as jiru belongs to the recent history of the island. Jiru, as explained in Chapter V, is a fire place sunk in the floor of an Okinawan house, often in the corner of the dining room which adjoins a hall or a sleeping room, and near the kitchen. Convalescence was called jiru because mother and child warmed themselves by the device. Today convalescence may be called jiru, though it has nothing to do with the old custom, which in the literature has been referred to as "roasting."

1 When I discussed this and the following beliefs relating to pigs with people in Matsuda, they ridiculed them and said there was no truth in it, implying that people in the south did not know what they were talking about. Subsequent rechecking convinced me that this was not so and that the beliefs in Minatogawa represent differences in the rural culture.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

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[354] In Matsuda, the jiru used after childbirth was either a small fireplace about three feet square set in the floor or an ordinary brasier (hibachi). The mother and the child were put in a dark sleeping room outfitted with the warmer. Sometimes the entire body of the mother was heated; in other cases, she seems to have placed herself so that the vagina received most of the heat. This was done regardless of season and happened in the hottest summer. The mother and child stayed in this room for 20 days. Attending female relatives went in and out only to keep things clean and to take care of the laundry. This form of jiru is said to have been practiced in Matsuda until 10 or 15 years ago.

In Hanashiro, this custom of warming was substantially the same. Regardless of season, the mother with her child retired to a dark room heated with a stove or a brasier. The mother nursed the child and no one entered or disturbed the two except for necessary attentions. No special portions of the body were heated. According to one Hanashiro woman, this custom existed up to 1940.[2] In present day practice, the mother rests for about 9 days including the day the child is born. During this period, the two are left alone. Necessary changes of clothing are put out and washed by female relatives. Following the rest period, the mother gets up, female friends and relatives clean the place thoroughly, and the house is back to normal.

In Minatogawa, warming is said to have disappeared about 20 years ago. The present period of convalescence lasts also about 9 days, with visits by grandparents on the day of birth, friends of the father on the second day, and those of the mother on the third.

[M
849] These customs seem to have died out because of the introduction, through Japan, of modern medicine and the growth of midwifery. The knowledge of a Japanese trained midwife is based on a study of anatomy and a thorough exposition of child birth and child care. Some lore, such as lucky days, and the reckoning of the tide enter, but her techniques are based on medical practice.[3]

2 An old man, a village official, said warming had disappeared 30 years ago, but in this matter the mother's testimony is probably the more reliable. In either event, both point to the relative recency of the practice.

3 One Japanese midwife uses as her guide two volumes by Kinoshita, Seichu. Sanbagakuhogi (Lectures on the Science of Midwifery), 1923. Vol. I deals with normal, Vol. II with difficult deliveries.

1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

grandparents. The food was then served: noodles cooked with vegetables, with a slight fish flavor; rolls; tempura, a sort of fritter; a fish cake known as kamobuko with a red border symbolizing happiness, and plenty of sake (awamori). A streamer hung from the ceiling near the alcove, announcing the name and date of birth of the new born child, together with the written wish that she might live any number of 10,000 year periods. There are no special ceremonies on these occasions. Some guests drop in for a few minutes, others remain for the whole evening. The women and the children go home early, while the men continue talking and drinking. This celebration is the first of a series that continues through a person's life, and if his descendants are devoted, will end 33 years after his death. After this celebration, things settle down until the child's first birthday.

852 [262] [212]

At present a child's age is reckoned in the same way as the Western custom. A child is one year old one year after the date of his birth. This is a recent innovation in force since January 1, 1950. Formerly age was reckoned in the Chinese and Japanese manner. A child born during a year was one year old and on the following New Year became two years of age. Thus a child born on December 27 would be two on January 1. The difference between the Chinese-Japanese and the western reckoning is that the former counts the years during which a person lives with New Years as the date for increasing the age, the latter counts the number of one year periods in which a person has lived.

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The old system of reckoning age is inconvenient and conceals age differences. A one day difference might mean a year's difference in age in the case of a child born on December 31, and another on January 1. Determining the actual age of a person was troublesome. When children started to school, they might be 6, 7, or 8 years old and still be about the same actual age.

4

The Early Years

In all the villages studied, the women returned to their normal tasks about a month after childbirth. When the mother returns to the fields, the grandmother may accompany mother and child to the fields, the grandmother watching the child, while the mother nurses it at 10, 1, and 4. If the grandmother is too old and disabled, the child might stay home with the grandmother and the mother return from the fields to feed the child. Lacking help of this kind, the mother remains at home until the other children have returned from school.

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But arrangements of this sort need not last long, for very early in life the child is strapped on the back and carried around

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a fact which has been a determinant in their historical development and an important factor in speculations about prehistoric events.

Until further archaeological evidence permits greater certainty, the original settlement of the Ryukyus is believed to have taken place predominantly from the Asiatic mainland, with occasional influx from the southern islands, Formosa, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Kerr, 1958). Surviving culture elements of great antiquity support these theories. Most frequently cited are a basic form of Shinto, characteristic of the religion, and the shamanistic role of the priestesses. Specifically, the "curved jewels," formerly worn by all priestesses, are mentioned as apparent links with the neolithic cultures of Japan.

On the other hand, sporadic contact with the islands to the south is evidenced by culture traits, such as raised houses of tropical design (common to all of Japan) and perhaps the practice of "mother roasting," a period of recuperation after the birth of a child during which the mother is kept near a fire. This custom is widespread in Malaysia (Cole, 1915:155).

Linguistic evidence points to a separation of Okinawan from a common proto Japanese language about 1500 years ago (Hattori, 1954). This may indicate a southern movement of peoples from Japan under the pressure of the Yayoi people who introduced the wet rice complex into southwestern and central Japan at this period. That this was not the earliest settlement of the Ryukyus, however, is evidenced by remains in the Ryukyus of the earlier Jomon period.

From the first mention of the Ryukyus in Chinese annals of 605 A.D. until the end of the nineteenth century when Japan formally annexed the islands, they stood in a curious relationship of dependency toward China and Japan. Both nations claimed suzerainty over the kingdom of Okinawa with its royal court in Shuri and extracted tribute. Eventually the Lord of Satsuma in southern Japan extended his sovereignty over the Ryukyus. But with ties to China remaining, Okinawa participated in both Chinese and Japanese culture, which disseminated through the urban trading center of Naha into the outlying areas. It is this intermediate cultural position which still gives Okinawa a peculiar character, although it long ago became part of Japan and abandoned direct contacts with China.

In 1872 Japan formally declared its claims on the Ryukyuan kingdom, and after deposing the last king in 1879, made the Ryukyuan islands a province of Japan, with the capital at Naha. Between this time and the present, intensive contact with Japan has led to an overwhelming absorption of Japanese culture, a willingness on the part of Okinawans to adopt Japanese ways and to identify with Japan as their

keep others from noticing sex activities. Keeping sex a private matter does not mean that there is a feeling of shame or guilt. It is considered a natural function, and although they do not discuss marital relations, men feel free to mention sex and its pleasurable aspects. Such conversations seem to cause some embarrassment among the younger women but are thought entertaining by older ones.

To men, sex, like food and drink, is to be enjoyed and indulged in. Women, too, enjoy sex but are more reticent and give much less overt expression to their desires. There are stories about women who are sexually aggressive, but they are either characters in the folklore or women of a neighboring village who are said to be this way "because they don't work hard enough." Men enjoy sex activity until an advanced age. One man over 60 whose wife had long been dead twice took a young woman as second wife; in both cases the women left him after a short period, but dissatisfaction with his sexual capacity was supposedly not the cause. Several children in Taira were fathered by men who had passed their sixtieth birthday. People believe that potency depends on physical well-being and age, but that it can be produced by a special drink consisting of sake in which a poisonous snake, the *habu*, is steeped. As soon as one finishes drinking this brew, its effects should be felt. Sake, meat, and eggs are also thought to increase potency.

Women's breasts are considered sexually stimulating. Men like to caress the breasts and the skin in general. Kissing occurs during foreplay only among some younger couples; older people do not care for it. In a room or house, shared with others, few couples undress fully for intercourse. Moving the baby to one side of the mat or mattress, a husband joins his wife.

There are no pre- or postparturition taboos; relations continue throughout pregnancy and are resumed about a week after childbirth, when the wife has taken her first bath. Men tend to disregard the public health nurse's urging that women be given a little longer rest.

That extra marital affairs do occur is evidenced by the presence of illegitimate children. But the mothers are likely to be widows or girls who for one reason or another did not get married at the usual age. Deformity may be a reason for not finding a husband. Two children in Taira were claimed to be the issue of an incestuous relationship between a man and his widowed daughter. Although the children were conceived and born outside the village, people became suspicious after the family returned to Taira. Because the putative father failed to deny paternity strongly, villagers felt certain that their suspicions

844 [853] kimonos, and diapers. He is placed under the blanket next to the mother and given a gauze nipple dipped in tea and sugar to suck, which is often his only food for as long as two days if lactation is slow. Meanwhile the afterbirth is wrapped in straw and left under the floorboards in the kitchen to await the outgoing tide.

846 593 Tea is now served in the front room, and the birth is discussed by the women who assisted. On one such occasion, the father and grandmother showed a little boy whose sister had just been born a great deal of affection. The father held the boy in his lap, and both adults told him that he was now a big brother.

844 851 156 At the first hour of the outgoing tide, old women—the grandmother of the baby, relatives, and neighbors—wrap the afterbirth in rice straw and bury it in a specified place outdoors behind the hearth. The purpose of the ceremony is to ensure that the child will be happy and sociable. To the accompaniment of laughing, loud clanging of pots and covers, and calling to each other, the women circle the house. When the burial is completed, they chant loudly, "May this baby al- [152] ways laugh and be pleasant." A stone is then placed over the burial mound so that the infant will not be frightened in his sleep, an emotion which is inferred from the jerking of a young infant while asleep.

852 565 462 [178] Until about 10 years ago a ceremony was performed by descendants of noble families from Shuri over the newborn to ensure success in his future role. For boys, a winnowing basket was propped up against a hoe on which a clump of soil and grass rested. While the father's mother held the child in one arm, she shot an arrow with a bow into the basket. This act was to make certain that the child would become a good [286] hunter (provider) as well as a successful farmer. The grass on the hoe symbolized strength. A girl, on the other hand, received a miniature loom constructed especially for such occasions, which was to assure her success as a weaver of cloth. A spool of banana fiber was presented along with the loom.

852 565 538 There is a story that long, long ago an infant was born on the beach. Immediately after he was born, as he still lay on the sand, a crab crawled over his chest. This infant grew up to be a strong, famous man. Shuri descendants still have a custom of grandmothers holding a newborn boy in their laps and releasing a small crab, which scurries over the infant's chest. These practices, however, are absent in central Taira now and are rarely found in the outlying settlements of predominantly Shuri descendants.

846 178 Formerly mother and child were confined to the darkened delivery room next to the kitchen and at the rear of the house for seven days, while an open fire was kept blazing in the brazier near the mother.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

Today the *yukajiru* ceremony held on the fourth day ends the seclusion. A group of close relatives gather to ask for the good health of the child and to make food offerings to the ancestors.

On the fourth or fifth day a name is selected for the newborn. In the old days rice oracles presided over by an old woman were consulted to ensure that the name consist of the proper combination of Japanese writing characters, an essential for the well-being of the child's personality. Today family elders and the local teacher are consulted. In the pre-Japanese periods, temporary names were used until a permanent name was given. This practice was intended to fool the spirits during the early years when the child was thought to be particularly susceptible to spirits.*

On the sixth day after birth the mother is allowed to take her first postdelivery bath; the room which she has occupied with her baby is cleaned and aired, and preparations begin for the *mansang* celebrations. For this event the mother's parents try to be present, especially if it is a first child. Friends and relatives in the village attend. A female elder of the patrilineal kin group or the priestess prays behind a tray of rice, rice wine, and incense so that the child will sleep peacefully and not cry at night. Thanksgiving prayers are offered to the ancestors and the nature deities for the health of both mother and child.

When the prayers are completed, a man sings the *mansang* song to the accompaniment of a samisen. The father of the baby then rises to dance briefly, sits down, and writes with brush and ink on a white sheet of paper the name and birth date of his child. The paper is then hung on the wall near the alcove. Meanwhile the special song is being concluded:

> Coming from the darkness to light,
> This baby was received as a treasure
> And the mother is being celebrated.

Food is then served, and the guests discuss the name and admire the newborn. Like all parties, the celebration ends with song, dance, and wine drinking.

The *mansang* celebrations mark the end of the most critical period for the infant. From now on he may be taken outdoors. At the month's end, his parents may take him to see his maternal grandparents in their village, to offer food at the ancestral shrine of the mother. This is called the first walk. Sons who have left the paternal village for the city return with their infant to observe this day.

* Hanging an irregularly left-woven rope in the delivery room to keep out evil spirits which might harm the newborn, is no longer done in Taira.

2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1983 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

There is no specific or preferred posture for nursing. While the mothers are in confinement for the brief period following delivery, they often lie next to the baby and feed him. Sitting while nursing is the most common posture, but mothers frequently nurse while standing or squatting. The baby is held loosely and the mother is relaxed. If others are about, she will carry on a lively conversation and occasionally pat the baby gently on or around the region of the buttocks. When alone, she holds the baby with one arm, talks softly, smiles, and with her other hand tugs gently at the baby's limbs. Each feeding is leisurely; the breast is never withdrawn from the infant's mouth. More often than not he suckles his fill and falls asleep.

It is as natural to suckle one's infant at a village meeting as it is to do so in the privacy of one's home. A common sight is that of a mother sitting and listening intently to speeches while cradling her suckling infant loosely in her arms. On buses, in market places, or at large public intervillage gatherings, one is sure to encounter such a scene.

The breast is used to soothe a baby when he is ill, irritable, or in distress from pain. This was quite evident when all the babies in the village were being given a series of innoculations for diphtheria and typhoid. As the injections were given in one large open room, the cries of the infant being innoculated prompted others to cry. Invariably the mother offered the breast to the baby.

After the birth of a child, the mother sits at home during a short rest period, watching happily as neighbors, friends, and relatives continually drop in to admire the newborn. Sipping tea, the visitors offer bits of advice, exchange the latest gossip, ask to hold the infant, and take their leave with the standard phrase: "Take care of yourself." It is a pleasant interlude, but as the family resources begin to dwindle, there is a slight but perceptible change in the attitude of the mother toward her newborn. The constant stream of visitors, for whom tea and some small tidbits must be offered, and her nonparticipation in the regular economic activities prove to be a drain on the family budget, in spite of the fact that the mother and her husband have worked with extra diligence in the months prior to parturition. The mother begins to talk about the approaching feast day and the need to get new clothing for the older children. She asks anxiously about the condition of the firewood market and starts to plan her inevitable resumption of work in the mountains and fields. In spite of her feelings of protectiveness and pity for the young baby, she begins, bit by bit, to reinstate her normal routine. Although she continues to cuddle, kiss, and affectionately nurse the infant, she thinks of the good weather and of how she might have been able to make one more trip to the mountains

before noon but for the fact that she had to return to attend to the infant.

If a grandmother is available, the mother straps the 3-to-4 months old baby onto the grandmother's back in the morning and goes off to the mountains with her husband to haul firewood or to the fields to cultivate sweet potatoes. For the first six months she returns to the house frequently during the day to nurse the infant. It is likely that while the infant demands feeding at short intervals, a mother will work in or around the village. At one of the locations for firewood bundling she can make the bamboo rings, fit the cut wood into them, and stack the bundles.

Throughout the morning hours grandmother, with the infant on her back, wanders about the village. Occasionally she offers her dry breast to the bawling infant who cannot seem to wait until its mother returns from the fields or mountains. If the mother is nearby, she hurries so that the infant does not cry for long. When the hour for lunch approaches, the grandmother hurries home to begin preparations for the noonday meal. As she walks, the infant's head bobs up and down, forward and back precariously, but it continues to sleep undisturbed.

After lunch has been eaten and the infant nursed, the adults in the household sip their tea and rest for an hour or so. Within that hour the mother may play with the infant or nap with it nestled in her arms. Rousing themselves from the noon nap, the adults return to the mountains and fields. The infant is again strapped to the grandmother's back, but this time as she slowly wends her way to the main thoroughfare, she calls out to someone in a house which boasts one of the few clocks in the village. "Hey, what is the time there?" The answer will quicken her pace, for it is near the time for an older sibling to return from school. As she reaches the main street, she joins other grandmothers as well as mothers who are anxiously scanning the direction from which the schoolchildren return. Each admires the infants on the other's back and exchanges timely topics of the day, but as the minutes pass and no children appear, they begin to grumble about the "irresponsible siblings who *must* be playing on their way home." At last the older child returns, and the grandmother hurries home with her charges, promptly transfering the infant onto the back of the older sibling. The old woman rushes to get her hoe and basket, mumbling to herself about the quantity of potatoes she should harvest for the next day's use.

An older child who ignores the crying of his infant charge will be criticized severely by his peers. If the mother happens to be in the

fields and away from the village, the young caretaker jiggles up and down to soothe the baby on his back. As his cries become frantic, the caretaker's peers will pat him on his buttocks and try to placate him by guiding his fingers to his mouth.

For the nuclear family with no other caretaker except the mother, the newborn proves to be a problem. One such mother complained that she could not do anything efficiently with a baby on her back. She was able to go to the fields to harvest potatoes but had to leave the laden basket until the afternoon to carry it home, for at that time the neighbor's child returned from school to look after the baby. In payment for baby-sitting services she had planned on buying the neighbor's child a dress for the next New Year.

In the nuclear family with school age children, the mother works around the house and in the nearby fields in the morning and rushes off to the mountains when her relief returns in the middle of the afternoon. Thus the infant which brought so much joy to the family and gave its mother respite from the rigorous routine for a short time becomes somewhat of a burden to all. Nevertheless, the baby continues to be indulged, pitied for his helplessness, and the object of affection.

It is important to note, briefly, the father's attitude and behavior during this initial period. Although only females were born during this study, interviews suggest that a male birth elicits a somewhat more solicitous behavior on the part of the father toward both mother and infant than a female one. The father will discourage the mother's early resumption of work and may even feel encouraged to carry the male infant despite the fact that children are deemed "women's work." Ostensibly, however, he seems embarrassed and disinterested in the whole matter be it a male or female. Congratulating visitors find that after a few polite exchanges the father will retire to a corner in the house as attention focuses on mother and child. After sitting out what seems a proper length of time, he will mumble some excuse or other and leave the house to do some chore. The observer visiting the household on the occasion of the birth of a fourth daughter found gloom and disgust in the father's expression. A male visitor who sat trying to convince the father that daughters are quite useful, too, received only contemptuous stares. His wife sat dejectedly holding the infant loosely in her arms. In contrast, a visit of the same purpose to another household on the birth of a fourth daughter revealed similar but notably less intense reactions on the part of the father. Perhaps because of the existence of one male heir he felt less threatened.

There is a tenacious belief in Taira that the female determines the sex of the child. If the woman fails to produce a male heir, the man

846 can take on a second wife. The woman who is delivered of her third
842 son is the envy of others who have none or only one son to their credit, for she has achieved what is considered to be the ideal in a wife. Thus the first mother with four daughters was treated with outright disgust and contempt by her husband, whereas in the second instance the mother was receiving the normal treatment of disinterest with minor solicitation.

593 The constant stream of visitors during the first month gives the
857 other children in the household a sense of importance. Whenever an
854 older child has a chance, he stresses the fact that there is a newborn in the house and reports the identity of the latest visitor to scores of admiring peers. He is the envy of the lot when at last he is allowed to carry the infant and play. But the envy is short lived, and the older sibling's pride withers rapidly when he finds that this is just another baby to be carried and cared for constantly. As the baby gains weight and no longer sleeps quietly for extended periods of time on the back, the older sibling begins to run and hide when he sees his mother approaching with the baby.

593 A few days after the birth of an infant, the fieldworker visited a
522 household and found the older siblings all crowded in the back room
857 with the mother and child. One of the girls, a 5-year-old who was
854 unusually sturdy and large in build, was teased by her mother. "Hey Hanako, let's give the teacher this baby, all right?" said the mother, winking on the side to the fieldworker. The little girl looked anxiously at the fieldworker and slowly edged over protectively toward the infant. She shook her head slowly and deliberately for some minutes, indicating that she would not assent to giving her baby sister away. At this point the grandmother entered the teasing and told the little girl that the baby would only prove to be a burden when she had to carry her later on, but she continued to shake her head. As the mother handed the baby over to the fieldworker, the girl burst into tears and cried out "No! No!" All laughed and assured her that the baby would remain in the household.

593 Several weeks later, Hanako proudly paraded her newest baby sister
857 for all her playmates to see. Many begged to carry the infant "for just a
854 little while" to no avail. When her older sister returned from school, she reluctantly gave up her charge in deference to age and experience. This went on for about two months until one day the fieldworker came on the mother calling frantically around the village for Hanako and the older girl. The older girl successfully evaded her mother, but Hanako was discovered and the baby was strapped to her back. Hanako

843 be drawn into the tomb. Some say the prospective father should also avoid these situations. Another set of observances has an easy delivery as its aim. The woman is urged to work hard and not to overeat so that the unborn child may not become too large. During the fifth month a "belly band" is wrapped tightly about her for the same purpose, especially to keep the head small.

A woman neither hides her pregnancy nor displays it unnecessarily--- if she is married and it is her husband's child. If this is not the case she may attempt to hide the fact. On the other hand if she is bearing what may be her husband's first son , she may be very pleased at the prospect, but she does not go out of her way to show it.

843 774 [847] No clear statement was given to the effect that the "soul" enters the body of the unborn child at a particular time, but statements are made about dangers to the shii of the child. One informant suggested that this soul-like entity enters the body of the mother during the third month and that for this reason a moxibustionist had refused to abort a woman after her third month had passed.

847 Abortion Abortions have always been and continue to be performed on Okinawa. The most frequent reason is said to be the desire not to bear an illegitimate child. An old-fashioned home method is to brew camphor-wood leaves and drink the brew or to burn the leaves and breathe the smoke. Experts in cautery are also believed to be able to cause an abortion by burning moxa on the proper areas of the body. But at the present time women are said to be aborted more frequently by midwives. The practice does not appear to be regarded as illegal.

844 Birth A woman tries to work up until the time of childbirth. If she has had several children already she knows when labor starts, how long it is likely to last, and may go out to the fields confident that she can return in time. Delivery is in the kucha, the back room of the house. Women of the family are present and men are not forbidden, though children are sent out. Often a woman's husband grasps her during delivery. Formerly she squatted on the floor holding a rope suspended from a house-beam above her. At present she is usually made to lie down. The labor is spoken of as "pain" but the woman must not cry out; she may only grunt when putting her strength into the ejection of the baby. If she were to cry out because of the pain she would later feel very ashamed---"because it is something that happens to every woman; people would talk about her."

Formerly the newly-born child was neither bathed nor dressed but simply
853 wrapped in an old kimono; now it is bathed in boiled water and dressed. The infant is permitted to nurse from about the fourth day on, after there is milk in the mother's breasts. Before this it may be given a little sugar in water and possibly allowed to suck a little colostrum about the second day after birth.

178 846 [359] Formerly the mother was kept in the kucha for about a week in front of a fire burning on the jiiru, an open hearth in country homes, a kind of brazier in the city.

brazier in the city. She was kept warm continuously, even in hot weather, so that, it is said, women often broke out in skin eruptions from the heat. At present younger women are not following this practice and many regard it as a foolish custom. The absence of jiiru in post-war houses may be a factor in the decline of the custom. 178 846 [354]

Post-natal Observances During the first year of life the child is the center of several ceremonies. They are in brief: 852

1) Mbagii sunji, "Red rice ceremony". Held on the day of birth. Relatives, friends, and neighbors come. Rice dyed red and a soup of taro stems (a symbol of many children) are offered to the ancestral tablets and served to the guests. The afterbirth is buried behind the house while the children are made to laugh so that the baby will have a good disposition. [844]

2) Naajiki, "Naming". Held during the first week. Practices vary. In one variety the baby's grandmother releases a crab and a grasshopper and shoots an arrow at a winnowing tray; in another she divines with rice grains to see if the name she has selected is proper. This rite was formerly held to give the baby its native Okinawan name. [553] [787]

3) Mansang, "Full birth". Held on the 7th or 30th day after the birth to celebrate the full term. A feast is served to relative, friends, and neighbors.

4) Naa'njii, "First going out". Held for a boy on the first day of the ten-day cycle, designated as kanii, on the second kanii day for a girl. The baby's grandmother makes it pray to the ancestral tablets and to the oven god, then marks its forehead with soot and takes it out, formerly to pray to the god of the pigsty-privy. [769] [782]

5) Hachi-atchii, "First walking". Held whenever the mother is first able to go to visit her parents and siblings. She takes gifts of food to them and in return they give money to the baby.

6) Tanka, "Birthday". Held on the first anniversary of the birth. A feast is prepared and many relatives and friends come bringing gifts of money. The child's future career is divined by placing a number of objects in front of it---money, a book, an abacus, food, etc. If the child chooses the money he will be rich; if the book, a scholar; if the food, a glutton; and so forth. The odds are usually weighted in favor of a desirable future. [527] [787]

There seems to be some variation in all of these practices. Several may be obsolescent because some of the elements entering into them are no longer in use, the pigsty-privy and the native names, for example. [178]

Infanticide New-born babies may be done away with if they are not wanted, but this is probably not at all common under ordinary circumstances. One example was recorded: An old woman who died recently lay for about a week on her death bed unable to talk. Her children gathered about her, wondering if some sin ('tsumi') were not in need of atonement ('tsugunai'). 847 783

753 that I found the greatest resistance to any suggestion that American methods
177 might have equal or greater validity. American material culture the Okina-
wans are delighted to accept, and they are eager for more. American social
[542] relationships they look somewhat askance at but they are willing to experi-
ment, in a small way, with equal rights for women. But the suggestion that
medically they don't know what ails them is harder to take. They are will-
ing to accept modern medical explanations of disease as a partial explana-
tion, perhaps as the occasional means by which the ultimate causes affect
disease. The ultimate causes are supernatural.

753 To challenge the concept ugwambusuku, the insufficiency of worship
177 that causes illness, is to challenge the present structure of religion, and
769 at a point where it is most closely bound to social organization. Anxiety
182 over insufficiency of worship and its possible consequences is probably the
strongest force motivating the whole range of activities connected with
death, burial, and the worship of ancestors. It is not too far-fetched to
suggest that it is also a reason for respecting one's elders during their
lifetime. It is no wonder that Okinawans show a strong resistance to any
challenge to these beliefs, even though they may not be conscious of all the
implications of the challenge.

753 To challenge the whole structure of belief would probably be wholly
177 unsuccessful. Or if somehow the Okinawans could be persuaded to abandon
757 these beliefs at once, the result would probably be either chaos or the un-
critical acceptance of another set of beliefs that might soon prove to be
just as far out of line with medical science as the present. Probably the
surest way to introduce modern medical concepts is by gradually whittling
down the native concepts beginning with the more peripheral ones. This is
not as hopeless as it might seem, for some changes have already taken place.
● [846] Until recently women after childbirth were baked for about a week over a
fire in the jiiru, a hearth in the back room of the house, even in hot wea-
ther. It is said that it was a very uncomfortable experience and that in
warm weather it often resulted in rashes and boils, yet it was practiced be-
cause it was thought to be necessary for the health of the woman. In the
last few years this practice has been abandoned. One woman informant was
positive that the hideous skin condition called heegasa or "scruff" could be
prevented by drawing out the "bad blood", but she was equally positive that
the former practice of baking a new mother was useless if not harmful. Some
day she may become convinced that cutting an infant's buttocks with a razor
is useless if not harmful. She will be convinced when someone has demo-
strated to her that heegasa can be prevented by another means and that be-
cause the blood circulates it is no more "bad" at one place than another. The
concept "bad blood" is a peripheral one, with no close relationship to re-
ligion or social organization.

Other peripheral beliefs are those associated with the yabuu, the
efficacy of moxa and the golden needle of acupuncture. In demonstrating the
superiority of modern medicine over these techniques one may not always
[181] count on the cooperation of educated Okinawans. In opposing the practice of
the yabuu and other practitioners one runs counter to one of the strongest
themes of Okinawan culture---one must not interfere with another's livelihood.